GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PLANNING
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4669
ANSWERED ON:09.05.2007
UNDER- DEVELOPED DISTRICTS OF NORTH BENGAL
Mollah Shri Hannan

Will the Minister of PLANNING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the districts of North Bengal are suffering from the problem of under development;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government has any proposal to treat the North Bengal districts at par with the other Backward Hill Districts in the country;

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;

(e) whether the Government has any plans to give special assistance for the development of those regions at par with Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN)

(a) to (d): Under Rashtriya Sam Vikas Yojana, launched in the Tenth Five Year Plan, 3 Districts of North Bengal, namely, Jalpaiguri, Uttar Dinajpur and Dakshin Dinajpur, are covered. These Districts were selected on the basis of criteria of population of SC/ST, agricultural productivity and agricultural wage rate by giving equal weightage to all three. The Rashtriya Sam Vikas Yojna was replaced by the Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF) in the year 2006-07. Four Districts of North Bengal, namely, Jalpaiguri, Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur and Malda, are covered under BRGF. These Districts would be allocated Central assistance as per BRGF norms during the Eleventh Five Year Plan period. Major part of Darjeeling District of West Bengal is also covered under Hill Area Development Programme and border Blocks of Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Coochbehar, Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur and Malda are also covered under Border Area Development Programme (BADP).

(e) & (f): The proposal to give special assistance for the development of those regions at par with Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand was not agreed to as the concessions and incentives for promoting industries in the States of the North-Eastern Region and other special category States like Sikkim, J&K, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand were granted because of geographical isolation, inaccessible terrain, poor `resource base` and remoteness to larger market and poor infrastructure in these States.